Understanding Empowerment among Retailers in the Informal Milk Sector in Peri-urban Nairobi:
Informing an Adaptation of the project-level Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index

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Overview: Gendered Opportunities and Constraints in Milk Trading in Peri-urban Nairobi

GAAP 2
- Understand how agricultural development projects empower women
- Develop measures of women’s empowerment (pro-WEAI) for project impact

MoreMilk
- Sub-study is an intervention with peri-urban milk retailers
- Primary outcome: Improve child nutrition and health (via better milk quality)
- Secondary outcome: Empower milk retailers

Present study
- MoreMilk & GAAP2 Collaboration

Photo: Jessica Heckert
Objectives

- Local understandings of empowerment

- Examine the experiences of milk retailers in relation to existing pro-WEAI indicators and the accuracy of those indicators

- Use qualitative findings to adapt pro-WEAI instrument and to evaluate intervention targeting milk retailers
Pro-WEAI

Intrinsic Agency
- Attitudes about domestic violence
- Self-efficacy
- Autonomy in income

Collective Agency
- Respect among household members
- Group membership
- Membership in influential groups
- Input in productive decisions

Instrumental Agency
- Visiting important locations
- Work balance
- Access to and decisions on financial services
- Control over use of income
- Ownership of land and other assets
Methods

- Semi-structured in-depth interviews (SSIIIs): 49
  - 27 women; 22 men
- Key informant interviews (KIIIs): 4
  - 1 woman; 3 men
- Focus group discussions (FGDs): 6
  - 3 FGDs of women (2 current; 1 former)
  - 3 FGDs of men (2 current; 1 former)
- Sampled for traits of successful milk retailers
  - Current or former
    - Licensed (or not); Business type (shop, milk bar, milk ATM, street vendor, mobile vendor); Source (producers, processors, brokers)
- Coding: deductive and inductive
Results
Local understandings of empowerment

Women and men

- Economic success
  - Men: good business skills, own assets
  - Women: good business skills, own assets, soft skills

- Support family and community
  - Women: community leader
  - Men: benevolent patriarch

Retailers

- Additional and more valuable assets
- Women:
  - Soft skills (polite, cheerful)
  - ‘Too friendly’

“Money is a matter of saving for you to be empowered.” Woman

Photo: Jessica Heckert
Indicator 1: Input in productive decisions

- Social networks: friends, family members, and those with business experience
  - Men talk to men only
  - Women talk to women, and anyone after entering business
- Collaborate with spouses
  - Some women were deferential to spouses
- No reprisal women’s independent choices

Instrumental Agency

“I have to make calculations…I do consult my husband. We do sit down calculate, discuss and decide.” Woman
Implications for pro-WEAI: Milk-specific productive decisions

“Handling, storing, and/or processing milk for sale, including boiling, making mala, etc.”

“Buying and transporting milk from a farmer or supplier”
Indicator 2: Asset ownership

General
- Not land (may rent premise)
- Gendered ownership
  - Men: borrow
  - Women: buy

Licenses
- 3 types: City council, Kenya Dairy Board, Ministry of Health
  - Application and licensing fees
- Risk of loss of milk and assets without one (though not a strong deterrent)
- Confusing and costly licensing process

“If one does not have a license, the authorities are constantly following them up, and they are not able to operate the business in peace. Sometimes one has to close shop and run away when the authorities come inspecting.” Man
Implications for pro-WEAI: Milk Specific Assets, Licenses

Assets

- Aluminum milk cans
- Milk ATM
- Gum boots

Licenses

- knowledge questions

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Indicator 3: Access to and decisions on financial services

Repayment
- Milk spoilage
- Sell milk on credit

M-Pesa
- Secure
- Women and men

Instrumental Agency

“If you apply for a loan and say the milk spoils…And, you know, in a week maybe you are supposed to pay 500. Where will you get that 500 to pay back?” Woman
Implications for pro-WEAI: M-Pesa, Repayment

M-Pesa

- If they have an account

Repayment

- Credit questions

G3.36. How do you typically recover payment (cash and/or in-kind) of milk sold on credit?

G3.37. How often did customers fail to repay you for milk they bought on credit in the last 12 months?

G3.38. Are you able to refuse to sell on credit when you would prefer not to?

G3.39. Do you think it is good for your business to sell on credit?
Indicator 4: Visiting important locations

Gendered constraints
- Community perception of women’s promiscuity
- Childcare obligations
- Transportation
  - Bicycles
  - Motorbikes
  - Trucks

“I know of a lady who was not married and was selling milk…The elders had to intervene and take her back to the parents and stop the milk business.” Woman
Implications for pro-WEAI:
Constraints to visiting important locations

- Transportation too expensive
- Not enough time
- Forbidden to go by spouse/partner

### G6.03. RESPONSE CODES

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<td>FORBIDDEN TO GO BY OWN FAMILY MEMBER</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>FORBIDDEN TO GO BY AN AUTHORITY</td>
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<td>10</td>
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**GAAP**
Lessons learned

- Adapting pro-WEAI and other existing survey measures needs to be undertaken carefully.
- Qualitative research is one approach that can systematically inform survey adaptations.
- The topics addressed by the pro-WEAI indicators resonate with the lived experiences of milk retailers.
- Revising some items will help make the pro-WEAI instrument more relevant for a non-producer population.